REMARKS

Claims 1-28 are pending in the application. Claims 2, 4, 10, 15-17, 19, 22, and 24-26 have been canceled. Claims 29-34 are newly added. Support for the newly added Claims is in the Applicant's Specification as filed. (*See* Page 6, line 21 - Page 7, line 24.) Claims 1-28 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Shima (U.S. Patent No. 6,333,789) in view of Lawande et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,219,697) and further in view of Wang et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,448,731). In response, Claims 1, 3, 18, 20, 27 and 28 have been amended to clarify the Applicant's claimed invention.

The Applicants' claimed invention is directed to Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP) requests which are requests to retrieve or modify objects (for example, text strings, counter values) stored in a managed element. The SNMP requests received by the managed element are prioritized based on a user identifier in a network management message wrapper included in each request. (*See* Applicants' Specification Page 7, line 24 - Page 8, line 9.) The user identifier identifies the user of an application from which the request was sent. (*See* Applicants' Specification Fig. 3 and Page 7, lines 7-16.)

The cited prior art, Shima is directed to a method for prioritizing printer requests issued to a printer based on the type of information included in the printer request. Each printer request is directed to a predetermined logical channel assigned to the type of information. (*See* Fig. 2A; Col. 5, lines 31-41 and Col. 8, lines 27-31.)

The cited prior art Lawande is directed to a method for operating the Internet Protocol over a high speed serial bus by integrating the IP protocol and the IEEE 1394 protocol. The IEEE 1394 operates as the physical layer and the data link layer. The IP protocol operates as the transport layer.

The cited prior art Wang is directed to a method of prioritizing deferred user requests in a data processing system. A user assigns priority to a request by assigning values to attributes included in the request prior to issuing the request. (*See* Abstract; Col. 4, lines 64-67; and Col. 6, lines 25-30.)

In contrast to the cited prior art, the Applicants' claimed invention assigns a priority value "to the network management request received by the managed element dependent upon a user

identifier in a network management wrapper included in the request, the user identifier identifying the user of an application from which the request is being sent" as claimed by the Applicants in base Claims 1, 18, 27 and 28. The combination of Shima, Lawande and Wang do not teach or suggest the Applicant's claimed invention for assigning priority dependent upon a user identifier in a network management wrapper included in the request. Shima discusses assigning priority based on type of information in the request only. Lawande does not even suggest the need for prioritizing requests. Lawlande merely includes a source identifier in an IP header that stores the address of the originating system as required by the IP protocol. The source identifier described by Lawlande does not teach or suggest the Applicant's claimed "user identifier in a network management wrapper included in the request." Wang merely discusses including user assigned priority in a request. The user assigned priority included in the request does not teach or suggest the Applicants' claimed "assigning a priority value to the network management request received by the managed element dependent upon a user identifier in a network management wrapper included in the request".

Shima is directed to printers, Wang to data processing systems and Lawlande is directed to network protocols. One of ordinary skill in the art of network management would not look to printers or data processing systems to provide the prioritizing of a network management request of the present invention as now claimed. Thus, there is no suggestion to combine Shima, Lawande and Wang. Instead, Shima discusses the advantages of not including priority in the request. (*See* Col. 8, lines 27-30.) Therefore, even if combined, the present invention as now claimed does not result as argued above.

The patentably distinguishing language reads in pertinent part:

> "assigning a priority value to the network management request received by a managed element dependent upon a user identifier in a message wrapper included in the request, the user identifier identifying the user of an application from which the request was sent;"

The above quoted claim language is in base Claims 1, 18, 27, 28, 29 and 30. Claims 3, 5-9, and 11-14 are dependent on Claim 1, Claims 20-21 and 23 are dependent on Claim 18, and thus include this limitation over the prior art.

Therefore, separately or in combination, Shima, Lawlande and Wang do not teach or suggest the Applicants' claimed invention. Thus, none of the cited prior art alone or in combination teaches or suggests the Applicants' claimed method for prioritizing a network management request. Accordingly, the present invention as now claimed is not believed to be anticipated or made obvious by the cited art or any of the prior art. In view of the foregoing, removal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and acceptance of Claims 1, 3, 5-9, 11-14, 18, 20-21, 23 and 27-34 are respectively requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that all claims (Claims 1, 3, 5-9, 11-14, 18, 20-21, 23 and 27-34) are in condition for allowance, and it is respectfully requested that the application be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (978) 341-0036.

Respectfully submitted,

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MARKED UP VERSION OF AMENDMENTS

Specification Amendments Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(b)(1)(iii)

Replace the paragraph at page 2, lines 11 through 19 with the below paragraph marked up by way of bracketing and underlining to show the changes relative to the previous version of the paragraph.

> A request for retrieval of one [a] or more managed objects from a managed element is generated by the network management application in the management station. The request for retrieval of one or more managed objects requires a message to be sent from the management station to the managed element. Each time a selected managed object is to be retrieved, a new message is required. Therefore, managing a managed object in the managed element may require continuously requesting information from the managed object. For example, to manage the performance of the computer network, the network management application may have to periodically request that the managed element return the value of a counter.

Claim Amendments Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(c)(1)(ii)

1. (Three Times Amended) A method for prioritizing a network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, comprising the steps of:

assigning a priority value to the network management request received by the managed element dependent upon a user identifier in a network management wrapper included in the request, the user identifier identifying the user of an application from which the request was sent; and

scheduling the network management request, by the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.

3. (Three Times Amended) The method as claimed in Claim [2] 1 wherein the step of assigning further comprises the step of:

adding a priority value to an authentication group comprising a plurality of users, in an authentication table.

18. (Three Times Amended) An apparatus for prioritizing a network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, comprising:

a priority assignment routine which assigns a priority value to the network management request received by the managed element dependent upon a user identifier in a network management header included in the request, the user identifier identifying the user of an application from which the request was sent; and

a network management request routine which schedules the network management request in the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.

20. (Three Times Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim [19] 18 wherein the priority assignment routine further comprises:

a priority value assignment routine which adds a priority value to an authentication group comprising a plurality of users, in an authentication table.

27. (Three Times Amended) An apparatus for prioritizing a network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, comprising:

a priority assignment routine;

a network management request scheduler;

means, within the priority assignment routine, for assigning a priority value to the network management request received from the managed element dependent upon a user identifier in a network management wrapper included in the network management request, the user identifier identifying the user of an application from which the request was sent; and

means, within the network management request scheduler, for scheduling the network management request in the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.

28. (Three Times Amended) A computer program product for prioritizing a network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, the computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable code thereon, including program code which:

assigns a priority value to the network management request received by the managed element dependent upon a user identifier in a network management header included in the request, the user identifier identifying the user of the application from which the request was sent; and

schedules the network management request in the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.